

**Standard 5-1:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of Reconstruction and its impact on racial relations in the United States.

**5.1.1** Summarize the aims of Reconstruction and explain the effects of Abraham Lincoln's assassination on the course of Reconstruction. (P, H, E)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand/ Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In Kindergarten, students illustrated the significant actions of important American figures, including Abraham Lincoln (K-3.2)

In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, students recalled the contributions made by historic and political figures to democracy in the United States, including Abraham Lincoln (1-4.1).

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students summarized the effects of Reconstruction in South Carolina, including the development of public education, racial advancements and tensions, and economic changes (3-4.7).

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students will summarize Reconstruction and its effects on daily life in South Carolina, including the experiences of plantation owners, small farmers, freedmen, women, and northern immigrants (8-4.2).

In United States history, students will summarize the effects of Reconstruction on the southern states and the roles of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments in that era. (USHC-4.4).

**It is essential for students to know:**

The aims of Reconstruction were different for different groups of Americans depending upon what their goals were:

**Abraham Lincoln's aim** was to preserve the Union and end the Civil War as quickly as possible. He promised an easy Reconstruction in order to persuade southern states to surrender. Lincoln promised that if 10% of the people of a state would pledge their allegiance to the United States of America and ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment, which abolished slavery, they could form a new state government, elect representatives to Congress and fully participate in the Union again. Lincoln was assassinated soon after Lee surrendered at Appomattox courthouse. His assassination did not immediately change the course of Reconstruction. However, Reconstruction policy did change within a year. It is a common assumption that Lincoln's easy Reconstruction policy would have continued if he had lived. However, Lincoln was determined to protect the rights of the freed slaves and his policy may have become stricter as southerners defied the intention of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment.

When Vice President Andrew Johnson became president he continued Lincoln's basic policy. However, Johnson's aim was also to humiliate the southern elite. He required southerners who owned large amounts of property to ask for a presidential pardon. Johnson wanted the elite southerners to acknowledge his power, but he granted pardons easily. While Congress was not in session, Johnson allowed southern states to form new state governments.

The aim of many southerners was to bring an end to the war, but they did not want their society to change. They were willing to recognize the end of slavery, but were not willing to grant rights to the freedmen. Southern states passed laws known as Black Codes that replaced the slave codes and kept the freedmen in positions of social, political and economic inferiority. Southerners used violence and threats to intimidate their former slaves. Southerners also elected former Confederates to Congress.

The aim of the United States Congress for Reconstruction was different from that of Southerners or the President. They wanted to ensure that the Civil War had not been fought in vain and that the freed slaves would indeed be free. They refused to allow the former Confederates elected as senators and representatives by the southern states to take their seats in Congress. They passed a bill extending the Freedman's Bureau so that it could continue to protect the rights of the freedman against the Black Codes. President Johnson vetoed the bill, but Congress overrode the veto. Congress also passed the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment, which recognized the citizenship of African Americans, and recognized the rights of all citizens to "due process of law" and "equal protection of the laws." Southern states refused to ratify the amendment and President Johnson campaigned against the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment in the Congressional elections of 1866. Because of the violence against the freedmen, described in the Northern newspapers, voters elected Republicans to Congress who promised to protect the outcome of the war and the freedom of the freedmen. This Republican Congress then established a new Congressional Reconstruction policy that called for military occupation of the southern states. Southern states were required to write new constitutions that would recognize the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment and the rights of African American citizens. This Congressional Reconstruction policy has been called Radical Reconstruction. This was a term that was used by southern critics to discredit Congressional Reconstruction by labeling it radical or excessive.

The aim of southern African Americans for Reconstruction was different from that of Southern whites and often from that of the United States Congress. African Americans wanted to consolidate their families and communities; establish a network of churches and other autonomous institutions; stake a claim to equal citizenship, which included access to land and education; and carve out as much independence as possible in their working lives.

**It is not essential for students to know:**

Students do not need to remember the details of Lincoln's assassination for the purposes of accountability on this indicator. However the fact that Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth whose intention was to avenge the South in Ford's theater and that Booth was later hunted down is considered part of the historical heritage of every American.

Students do not need to know how many Southerners requested a special pardon from President Johnson or that Johnson harbored resentment against the planter elite because he was himself a poor white. Students do not need to remember the details of the Black Codes however they should know that these laws restricted the freedom of freedmen much like slaves codes had before the end of slavery.

Students do not need to know that Congressional Reconstruction divided the South into five military districts each with a military governor.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments require students to **summarize** the aims of different people/groups for Reconstruction. Students should be able to **compare** the aims of President Lincoln and Congress and the aims of Southerners and Congress. Students should be able to **explain** why Reconstruction policy changed.